

## BETWEEN DREAMS

half-asleep in the early morning i see her  
tiptoeing from the bathroom to the closet  
with no clothes on, and then at the  
closet door i see her slip into a blouse before  
going over to the dresser for a pair of  
panties. she does these things with the  
utmost of quiet, thinking that i am still fast  
asleep. every morning it is almost the same way,  
since she has to be out earlier than i have to be.  
i like it best when fresh from the shower she  
glides into the bedroom without a stitch on,  
and then stands on the scale in front of the window,  
which is usually softly glowing at that hour with  
a dawn bluish-gray. she stands there, hands  
folded under chin, arms pressed securely  
against breast. naturally, at this  
moment i make a quick study of her body, and  
often enough i come to the same exact conclusion:  
it is like no other woman's body i have ever known;  
it has its own particular rules and landscapes.  
i wonder at the way it decides the flow  
of passions in my life, how it influences  
my energy like the wind influences waves  
and leaves. when she finally goes down to  
the kitchen i feel alone in the bed,  
in the world. her scent lingers  
briefly in the room. i am helplessly  
between dreams so it seems, and i have only  
my breathing.

## MORE TOMATOES FROM MY FATHER'S GARDEN

we cannot keep up with the tomatoes  
from my father's garden. lots of them  
go bad before they can be picked.  
next year, he says, the garden will be  
smaller, claiming that there's too much work  
and too much waste. when my mother makes a salad  
tomatoes dominate. the plate is piled high  
with them. there's almost no room in us  
for anything else. when i leave their house  
i'm given a huge bag of tomatoes to  
take home. and believe me, i am grateful  
for this; they are so meaty and substantial,  
so hearty in spirit. and what  
georgette and i don't use can always be  
given away. i've never seen anyone  
refuse a big beautiful tomato.  
as i drive the dark country  
roads the huge bag of tomatoes  
is on the seat next to me.



i keep thinking that perhaps  
i should put the seatbelt  
around it.

## CHINESE TAKE-OUT

i yelled to her to bring some chinese food back with her  
when she was going out the door, but i didn't know  
whether she heard me or not. it wasn't until around  
midnight that she came in, and when she did she had  
a large bag in her arms and from it i could smell  
the aroma escaping of our favorite dishes. so i  
got her a beer glass and on the coffee table i put  
sticks and napkins and paper plates. i cannot  
tell you how many times we have had these dishes;  
really, there's no sense in me even trying to  
venture a guess. in the basket on the mantelpiece  
are enough slips from fortune cookies to choke  
a cat. often when i am going out the door  
she'll yell to me to pick up chinese. that's  
all she has to say. and when i get to the  
restaurant smiles meet me there. they know  
exactly what i'm there for. i'm not even asked  
or handed a menu. the girl at the cash register  
will fill out the order without me having to  
say a word. it's to the point where  
to change dishes we'd have to change restaurants.  
at our usual place a change in our order  
would not be believed. it'd be tantamount to  
breaking an oath. and it is with this  
knowledge we live, and so we know it'd be  
a catastrophe to tire of the dishes we are  
associated with. true, there have been  
nights when we have looked at one another,  
at the sameness of the dishes in front  
of us, at the same faceless shrimp and  
the same cubes of tofu diced with such  
meticulousness, at the same bold forests  
of broccoli and the same strands of  
surrendered cabbage — we have looked at  
these and ourselves and we have honestly  
questioned how long we can persist  
in this madness. i know when we pass  
the new mexican restaurant, down by  
the old post office, we are tempted  
with what take-out might be like there.  
but, even though our oath is  
an unspoken one, still we  
chose to live by it,  
and in this way  
the years pass.